

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 04646 161720Z

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ACTION AF-06

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R 161352Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9020

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4646

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS

SUBJECT: REPORT OF CONVOY PROCEDURES FROM ADIGRAT TO ASMARA

1. TWO YOUNG AMERICAN TOURISTS, ONE CLAIMING TO BE FREE-LANCE WRITER AND PART-TIME SALESMAN OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, WHO HAVE BEEN IN ETHIOPIA FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, HITCHHIKED - WITHOUT BENEFIT OF CLEARANCE - FROM SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA TO ASMARA IN TRUCKS DESTINED FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN ASMARA. IN A CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, THEY REPORTED ON CONVOY PROCEDURES IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA.

2. THE TELECOMMUNICATION TRUCKS JOINED THE 300-400 TRUCK ASMARA-BOUND CONVOY ON MARCH 26 AT ADUA, OVERNIGHTING IN BOTH ADI UGRI AND ADI QUALA, ARRIVING IN ASMARA THE AFTER-NOON OF MARCH 28. THEY WERE ESCORTED BY "SEVERAL HUNDRED" EPMG TROOPS AND THREE ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS (APC). THE ESCORT, SPEARHEADED BY APCs, LEFT TOWN IN ADVANCE OF THE CONVOY SECURING THE ROAD AND THE HIGH GROUND ON EITHER SIDE. ONCE THIS STEP WAS COMPLETED, THE CIVILIAN CONVOY COULD PROCEED, ALTHOUGH THE PACE RARELY EXCEEDED 10 MPH.

3. THE TWO AMERICANS NOTED THAT TWO SMALL BRIDGES OVER SEASONAL RIVERS BETWEEN ADI QUALA AND ADI UGRI WERE TOTALLY DESTROYED FORCING THE CONVOY INTO THE RIVERBED.

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 04646 161720Z

ONE LARGER BRIDGE IN THE SAME STRETCH WAS DAMAGED, BUT

STILL USABLE. ROAD THROUGH MOUNTAINS NEAR ADI QUALA
ALSO HAD BEEN DAMAGED IN TWO AREAS BY "EXPLOSIONS" BUT
HAD BEEN REPAIRED. THEY OBSERVED THREE BURNED OUT AND
ABANDONED TRUCKS ALONG THE ROUTE. ON THEIR TRIP NORTH
THEY PASSED A SOUTHBOUND CONVOY OF 327 TRUCKS WHICH ALSO
HAD AN IMPRESSIVE ESCORT. THE CONVOY ARRIVED IN ASMARA
WITHOUT INCIDENT, TO THE CONSIDERABLE RELIEF OF BOTH DRIVERS
AND ESCORTS.
HUMMEL

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